

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Canceled).

2. (Currently amended) A nut, comprising:

a nut body having an outer wall formed in a shape of a polygon and an inner wall defining a through hole including at least a portion thereof being defined by a wall hole having inclined inner surfaces, a diameter of the wall hole decreasing from a first diameter proximate a first end to a second diameter proximate a second end;

a stop extending radially inward into said through hole at said first end of the nut body, the stop defining a bolt exit aperture of said through hole;

at least two guides formed coaxially on said inner wall of the nut body at said inclined wall hole, extending in a direction parallel to an axis of said through hole, said guides each having a pair of side faces extending in a radial direction of said inclined wall hole;

at least two nut segments having inclined outer surfaces and being movably disposed between the guides so as to permit sliding movement in an axial direction and radial displacement urged by sliding engagement of said inclined outer surfaces with said inclined inner surfaces of said wall hole, each of said at least two nut

segments having an inner surface facing said axis of said through hole, said inner surface having a screw thread for engaging a thread of said bolt;

said nut segments having pairs of nut segment side faces inclined with respect to each other at said opposing face inclination angle such that a width of said at least three nut segments decreases radially toward said axis of said through hole so that said opposing pairs of said side faces limit movement of said nut segments toward said axis in said radial direction;

a spring disposed in the nut body between said stop and said at least two nut segments to bias said at least two nut segments toward said second end of said nut body;

said nut body including an attachment part provided axially adjacent said second end, said attachment part having a substantially constant outer diameter allowing said attachment part to be freely insertable into a receiving hole of clearance diameter formed in an attachment member, a portion of said nut body adjacent said attachment part abutting said attachment member on a first side of said attachment member when said attachment part is inserted into said receiving hole; and

engagement means for fixing said attachment part to said attachment member in a manner preventing mutual separation of said nut body and said attachment member after insertion of said attachment part into said receiving hole, said engagement means including a plurality of fitting pieces disposed at a terminal end of said attachment part, said fitting pieces extending orthogonally outward of the

attachment part formed as a result of permanent outward deformation created after insertion of said attachment part in an axial direction into said receiving hole, thereby allowing rotation of the nut while preventing relative axial movement between said nut and said attachment member, said nut body being disposed on said attachment member for threadable reception of a bolt in an insertion direction leading into said second end of nut body from a second side of the attachment member opposite said first side, ~~at least a length segment of the bolt extending from said second side of the attachment member when engaged with the nut body being free of structure supporting said bolt or contacting said second side of the attachment member,~~ such that when the bolt is threadably engaged with the nut and tightened, loss of tightening power is automatically inhibited in an event of an axial shifting of the bolt relative to the attachment member in the insertion direction due to a biasing power of the spring acting on the at least two nut segments.

3. (Previously presented) A nut according to claim 2, wherein:

said attachment part further includes a support axle provided at a small diameter portion of said nut body, said attachment part having a diameter smaller than an outside diameter of said nut body; and

the fitting pieces are formed at an outer circumferential portion of an end of said support axle.

4. (Withdrawn) A nut according to claim 2, wherein:

said attachment part further includes a support piece formed in a shape of a flange at an outer circumferential portion of said nut body; and

the fitting pieces are formed at an outer circumferential portion of said nut body which serves as the attachment part.

5. (Previously Presented) A nut according to claim 2, wherein said engagement means include at least a portion of each of said fitting pieces which is a result of the outward deformation thereof effected by application of pressure after insertion of said attachment part into said receiving hole such that a modified outside diameter of said attachment part at said at least the portion of each of said fitting pieces is attained which is larger than a minimum diameter of said receiving hole, whereby said nut body is captively maintained to said attachment member.

6. (Currently amended) A fastener combination, comprising:

an attachment member including a receiving hole;

a nut body having an outer wall formed in a shape of a polygon and an inner wall defining a through hole including at least a portion thereof being defined by a wall hole having inclined inner surfaces, a diameter of the wall hole decreasing from a first diameter proximate a first end to a second diameter proximate a second end;

a stop extending radially inward into said through hole at said first end of the nut body, the stop defining a bolt exit aperture of said through hole;

at least two guides formed coaxially on said inner wall of the nut body at said inclined wall hole, extending in a direction parallel to an axis of said through hole, said guides each having a pair of side faces extending in a radial direction of said inclined wall hole;

at least two nut segments having inclined outer surfaces and being movably disposed between the guides so as to permit sliding movement in an axial direction and radial displacement urged by sliding engagement of said inclined outer surfaces with said inclined inner surfaces of said wall hole, each of said at least two nut segments having an inner surface facing said axis of said through hole, said inner surface having a screw thread for engaging a thread of said bolt;

said nut segments having pairs of nut segment side faces inclined with respect to each other at said opposing face inclination angle such that a width of said at least three nut segments decreases radially toward said axis of said through hole so that said opposing pairs of said side faces limit movement of said nut segments toward said axis in said radial direction;

a spring disposed in the nut body between said stop and said at least two nut segments to bias said at least two nut segments toward said second end of said nut body;

said nut body including an attachment part provided axially adjacent said second end, said attachment part having a maximum outer diameter smaller than the receiving hole in the attachment member allowing said attachment part to be freely insertable into the receiving hole, a portion of said nut body adjacent said attachment part being configured to abut said attachment member on a first side of said attachment member when said attachment part is inserted into said receiving hole; and

engagement means for fixing said attachment part to said attachment member in a manner preventing mutual separation of said nut body and said attachment member after insertion of said attachment part into said receiving hole, said engagement means including a plurality of fitting pieces disposed at a terminal end of said attachment part, said fitting pieces extending orthogonally outward of the attachment part formed as a result of a permanent outward deformation created after insertion of said attachment part in an axial direction into said receiving hole, thereby allowing rotation of the nut while preventing relative axial movement between said nut and said attachment member, said nut body being disposed on said first side of said attachment member for threadable reception of a bolt in an insertion direction leading into said second end of nut body from a second side of the attachment member opposite said first side, ~~at least a length segment of the bolt extending from said second side of the attachment member when engaged with the nut body being free of structure supporting said bolt or contacting said second side of the attachment~~

~~member~~, such that when the bolt is threadably engaged with the nut and tightened, loss of tightening power is automatically inhibited in an event of an axial shifting of the bolt relative to the attachment member in the insertion direction due to a biasing power of the spring acting on the at least two nut segments.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Previously Presented) A fastener combination according to claim 6, wherein said engagement means include at least a portion of each of said fitting pieces which is formed as a result of the outward deformation thereof to be effected by application of pressure after insertion of said attachment part into said receiving hole such that a modified outside diameter of said attachment part at said at least the portion of each of said fitting pieces is attained which is larger than a minimum diameter of said receiving hole, whereby said nut body is captively maintained to said attachment member.

9. (Withdrawn) A fastener combination according to claim 6, wherein said engagement means include threads formed on said attachment part and a mounting member threadably engageable with said threads of said attachment part, said mounting member being received to said nut body so as to abut an opposite side

of said attachment member to a side abutted by the portion of said nut body adjacent said attachment part.

10-15. (Canceled).

16. (Previously presented) The nut according to claim 2, wherein said fitting pieces comprise arcuate members disposed in circumferentially spaced apart positions of the attachment part.

17. (Previously presented) The nut according to claim 16, wherein spaces between said arcuate members have a width smaller than an arcuate length of said arcuate members.

18. (Previously presented) The nut according to claim 16, wherein said fitting pieces comprise four arcuate members.

19. (Previously presented) The nut according to claim 18, wherein each of said arcuate members forms an arc of approximately 90 degrees.

20. (Previously presented) The fastener combination according to claim 6, wherein said fitting pieces comprise arcuate members disposed in circumferentially spaced apart positions of the attachment part.

21. (Previously presented) The fastener combination according to claim 20, wherein spaces between said arcuate members have a width smaller than an arcuate length of said arcuate members.

22. (Previously presented) The fastener combination according to claim 20, wherein said fitting pieces comprise four arcuate members.

23. (Previously presented) The fastener combination according to claim 22, wherein each of said arcuate segments forms an arc of approximately 90 degrees.

24-27. (Canceled)